



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE CHAIR RAÚL M. GRIJALVA

S. 3051: AMERICA'S CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACT (ACE ACT) Bill improves protections for wildlife and habitat.

Summary of America's Conservation Enhancement Act

S. 3051 is a package of bipartisan, bicameral bills that enhance wildlife and habitat, helping to combat the climate crisis and boost nature's resiliency. This legislation comes at a critical time when climate change, habitat destruction, invasive species, and pollution have fueled an extinction crisis, impacting not only wildlife and habitat, but also the hunters, anglers, and other recreational users who depend upon them. This package contains provisions to protect and enhance climate-resilient wetlands and fish habitat, help the Chesapeake Bay region prepare and adapt to climate change, address issues in the hunting and angling communities, and prevent conflicts between predators, humans, and livestock. It also contains provisions to combat invasive species as well as chronic wasting disease in animals like deer.

Background

- In May 2019, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment Report concluded that about 1 million species globally are threatened with extinction. These threats are driven by climate change, habitat destruction, invasive species, disease, and more. We need an array of solutions to confront these problems. The ACE Act is an essential step towards protecting and restoring wildlife and habitat.
- Three-quarters of the terrestrial environment and about 66 percent of the marine environment have been significantly altered by human actions, according to the IPBES Global Assessment. S. 3051 combats habitat destruction by authorizing the National Fish Habitat Partnership program and reauthorizes the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and reauthorizes and creates several programs that restore the Chesapeake Bay and promote its resilience to climate change.
- Hunting and fishing are timeless traditions in our country – but these pastimes are dependent upon healthy wildlife and habitat. The ACE Act contains provisions to combat chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal prion disease affecting cervids like elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and moose in 26 states across the country. The ACE Act also codifies the National Fish Habitat Partnership program, which leverages public-private partnerships to enhance fish habitat across the country.
- The ACE Act aims to reduce conflicts between humans, livestock, and predators in places where they interact. The bill would create a prize competition for innovations that reduce conflicts between humans and predators. It would prevent harm to livestock by allowing permits for the taking of black vultures to livestock farmers. It would also address losses of livestock due to depredation by federally protected species. By reducing these conflicts, there will be fewer deaths for wildlife and fewer injuries to humans and livestock.

- There is no silver bullet solution to the extinction crisis, and this package of ideas represents actions that members of Congress from both chambers and both sides of the aisle can support. While more needs to be done, this is an important step in the right direction for wildlife and the habitat it depends upon.

Bills included in America's Conservation Enhancement Act

- S.2194 - PREDATORS Act (Sen. John Barrasso, R-WY) – 3 cosponsors (1 Democratic, 2 Republican): Amends the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to establish the Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize for reducing human-predator conflict. Conflicts with animals such as grizzly bears, sharks, mountain lions, and alligators have proven dangerous for both humans and the species. These grants incentivize innovation of non-lethal technologies, which may include the application and monitoring of tagging technologies.
- H.R. 3655 - Livestock Protection Act of 2019 (Rep. Trey Hollingsworth, R-IN) – 19 cosponsors (19 Republican): Affirms the existing authority of the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), to issue depredation permits for the taking of black vultures to livestock farmers to prevent harm to livestock. The permits may only be issued to livestock producers in states and regions affected or that have been affected in the prior year by black vulture or common raven depredations, as determined by the Secretary.
- H.R. 837 – Chronic Wasting Disease Transmission in Cervidae Study Act (Rep. Ralph Abraham, R-LA) – 32 cosponsors (4 Democratic, 28 Republican): Requires the National Academy of Sciences to study the predominant pathways and mechanisms of the transmission of chronic wasting disease in wild, captive, and farmed populations of deer, elk, reindeer and moose populations in the United States.
- H.R. 925 - North American Wetlands Conservation Extension Act (Rep. Mike Thompson, D-CA) – 34 cosponsors (21 Democratic, 13 Republican): Reauthorizes the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025, at an authorized appropriations level not to exceed \$60 million per year. NAWCA provides matching grants to wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, which increase wetland habitat and support local economies and outdoor traditions like hunting, fishing, bird watching, and family farming.
- H.R. 4831 - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Reauthorization Act of 2019 (Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-MI) – 1 Cosponsor (1 Republican): Reauthorizes appropriations for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) at \$25 million for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025.
- H.R.1620 - Chesapeake Bay Program Reauthorization Act (Rep. Elaine Luria, D-VA) – 19 cosponsors (16 Democratic, 3 Republican): Reauthorizes appropriations for the Chesapeake Bay Program at \$90 million for fiscal year 2020, \$90.5 million for fiscal year 2021, \$91 million for fiscal year 2022, \$91.5 million for fiscal year 2023, and \$92 million for fiscal year 2024.
- H.R. 2427 - Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network Reauthorization Act (Rep. John Sarbanes, D-MD) – 16 cosponsors (14 Democratic, 2 Republican): Reauthorizes appropriations of \$3 million for each fiscal year through 2025 to include both the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network and the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Grants Assistance Program.
- H.R.4967 - Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense Act of 2019 (Rep. Bobby Scott, D-VA) – 20 cosponsors, (17 Democratic, 3 Republican): Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to establish the “Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense program” (the Chesapeake WILD program) to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Secretary must also adopt a Chesapeake Bay watershed-wide strategy in support of the implementation of shared science-based restoration and protection activities and targets cost-effective projects with measurable results.
- H.R. 1747 - National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act (Rep. Rob Wittman, R-VA) – 7 cosponsors (6 Democratic, 1 Republican): Codifies the National Fish Habitat Partnership, a program established in 2006 through a state-led public-private partnership at the FWS, and establishes a National Fish Habitat Board to oversee and promote implementation of the title. Authorizes \$7.2 million per each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for approved fish habitat conservation projects.